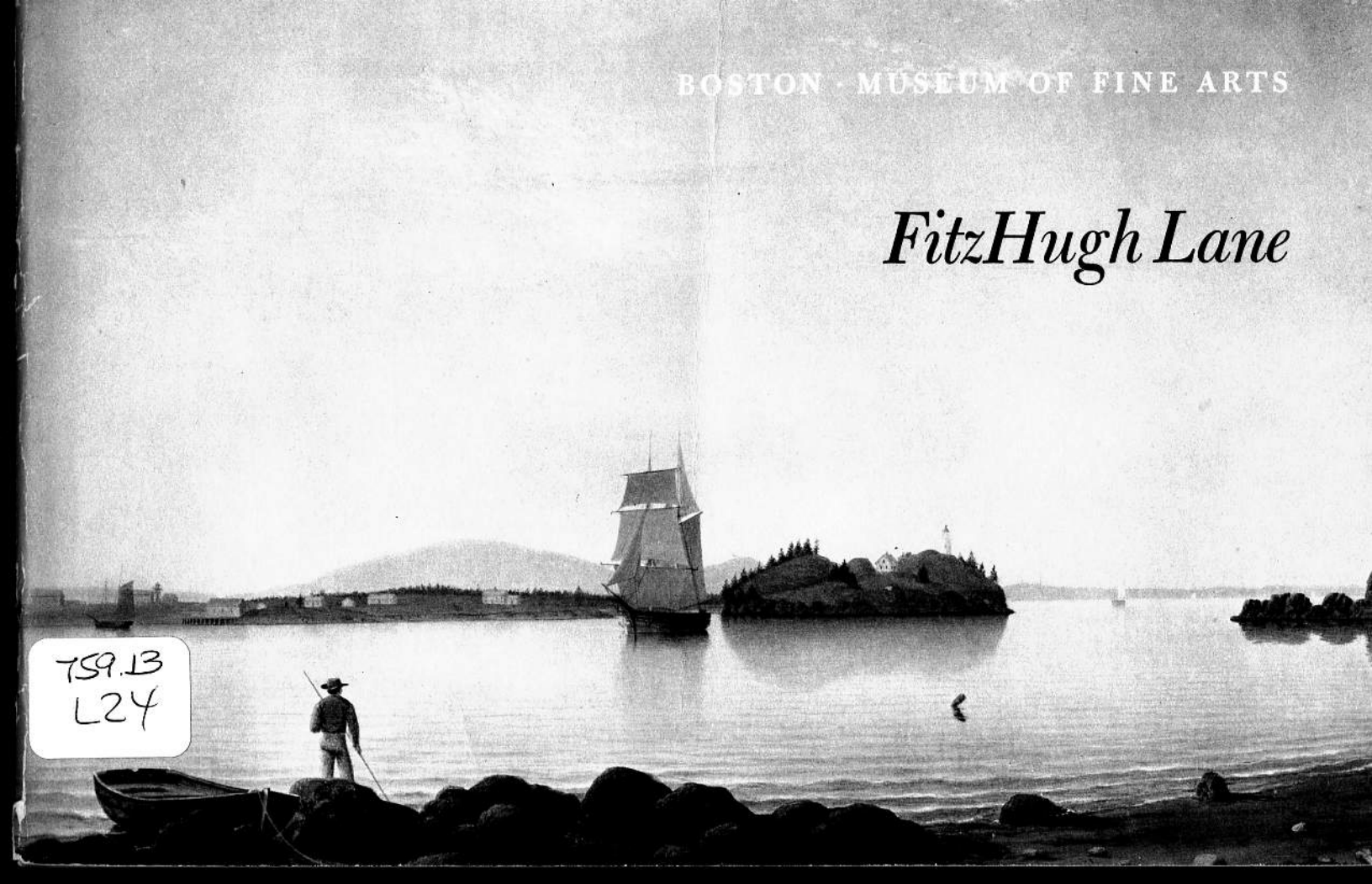


BOSTON · MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

*FitzHugh Lane*

759.13  
L24



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS *PICTURE BOOK NUMBER EIGHT*

*Prepared by*

RICHARD B. K. McLANATHAN Curator of Decorative Arts and Editor of Museum Publications

1956

*Second edition, 1972*

*Designed and composed by*

THE STINEHOUR PRESS Lunenburg, Vermont

*Printed by*

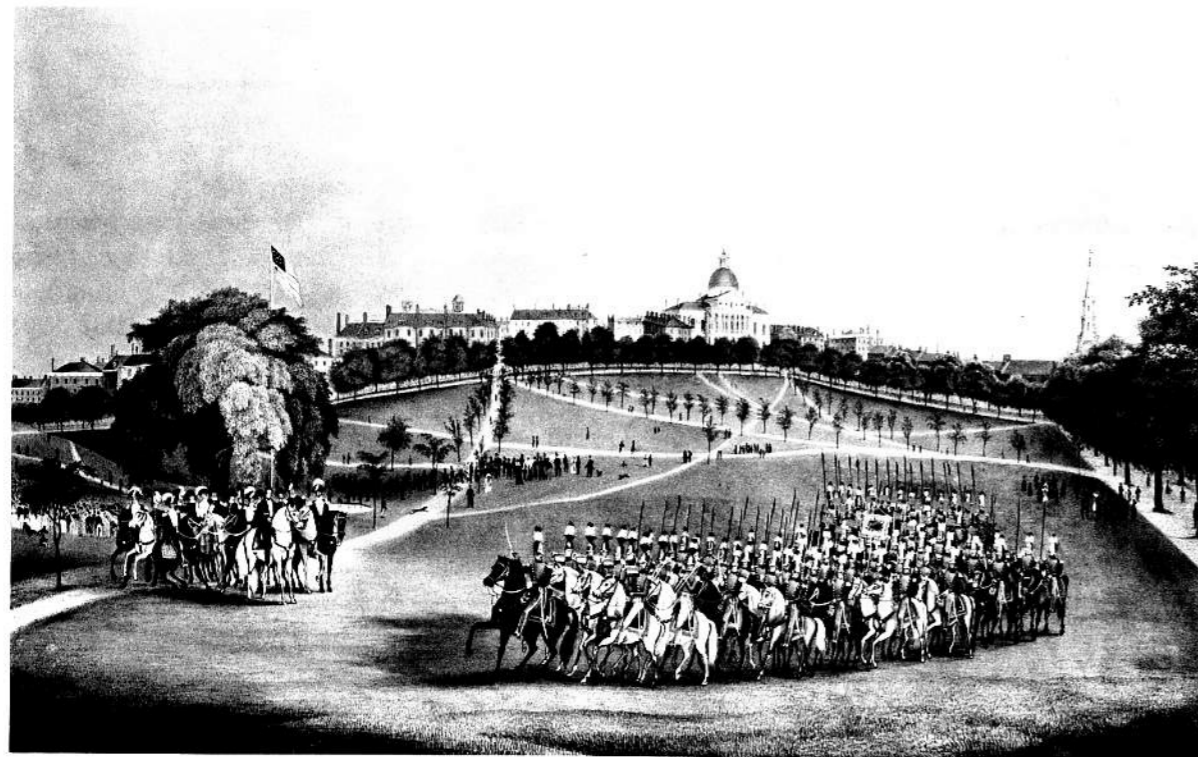
THE MERIDEN GRAVURE COMPANY Meriden, Connecticut

FITZHUGH LANE 1804-1865

FITZHUGH LANE is one of the most lyrical of American painters. A realist in his approach to painting, his work, like that of Martin J. Heade, reflects a new sensitivity to the special qualities of American light. Though a hushed quiet pervades almost all his paintings, and his compositions in general have a marked sense of repose, there is nevertheless an intensity in the concentration with which he records what he sees that equally expresses his poetic feelings about the scene. The result seems today almost an understatement, so devoid is it of the paraphernalia of contemporary romanticism, yet it reveals with the same magical clarity which illumines all his painting a sense of the inner spirit and meaning in the everyday natural world which Emerson, Bryant, and Thoreau also found there.

Born at Gloucester, Massachusetts, on December 18, 1804, Lane became crippled as the result of illness in his early childhood and had to use crutches through-

out his life. He was, however, able to travel, and it is known that he made several trips along the coast of Maine. Although there is no evidence that he visited New York, Havana, or Puerto Rico, it would seem likely that he did so from the accurate and detailed paintings he made of the harbors there. As a boy, Lane sketched and painted in Gloucester, especially around the harbor with its variety of craft. He had no artistic training until he moved to Boston in the early eighteen-thirties and became an apprentice to Pendleton, the lithographer, who was soon succeeded by Thomas Moore. Benjamin Champney, who later became an apprentice in the same firm, wrote: "F. H. Lane, afterwards well-known as a marine painter, did most of the views, hotels, etc. He was very accurate in his drawing, understood perspective and naval architecture perfectly as well as the handling of vessels, and was a good all-round draughtsman . . ." Detailed lith-



*The National Lancers with the Reviewing Officers on Boston Common.* Hand-colored lithograph by FitzHugh Lane after Charles Hubbard, published by Thomas Moore, Boston, 1837. M. and M. Karolik Collection of 18th Century American Arts. 39.257

ographic views of Gloucester date from this period, and numerous copies have survived, indicating their popularity. About 1835 Lane formed his own lithographic business with J. W. A. Scot, a marine painter. Portraits of Boston landmarks such as the Commercial Coffee House, views of neighboring towns, and decorative poster-like lithographs calling attention to local institutions such as the Boston Riding Academy show the range of subject matter. The firm was active until after 1847. Lane then returned to Gloucester, and on August 4, 1849, the following notice appeared in a local paper: "Mr. Lane has now on exhibition at his studio, Elm St., four paintings, one a view of Gloucester Harbor. . . . Mr. Lane's Rooms are open at all hours of the day and we advise all our readers who have any love of art to call there and look at his paintings."

With the exception of a self-portrait, Lane confined his paintings to landscapes and seascapes and aroused great admiration among his contemporaries. For example, the *Gloucester Telegraph*, November 5, 1851, quoting the *Boston Transcript* said: "Since Salmon's

death, we have no one who can paint a ship and ocean prospect like him. His 'squalls at sea' are the best thing of the kind that we remember to have seen." Lane made numerous notes in the form of sketches during his trips and from his observations in Gloucester. Many are panoramic and portray in detail such towns as Blue Hill and Castine, Maine. They are often dated and inscribed with the names of those for whom the subsequent paintings were to be made. A large group of these, the Samuel Mansfield Collection, is owned by the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary, and Historical Association, Gloucester.

During his lifetime the artist exhibited at the Boston Athenaeum, the Charitable Mechanic Association, the New England Art Union, Boston; the American Art Union, the National Academy of Design, New York; and the Albany Gallery of Fine Arts, of which he was an honorary member. The last fifteen years or so of his life were spent in an unusual stone house, which he and his brother-in-law, Ignatius Winter, built according to their own interpretation of the Gothic style. He died there on August 13, 1865.



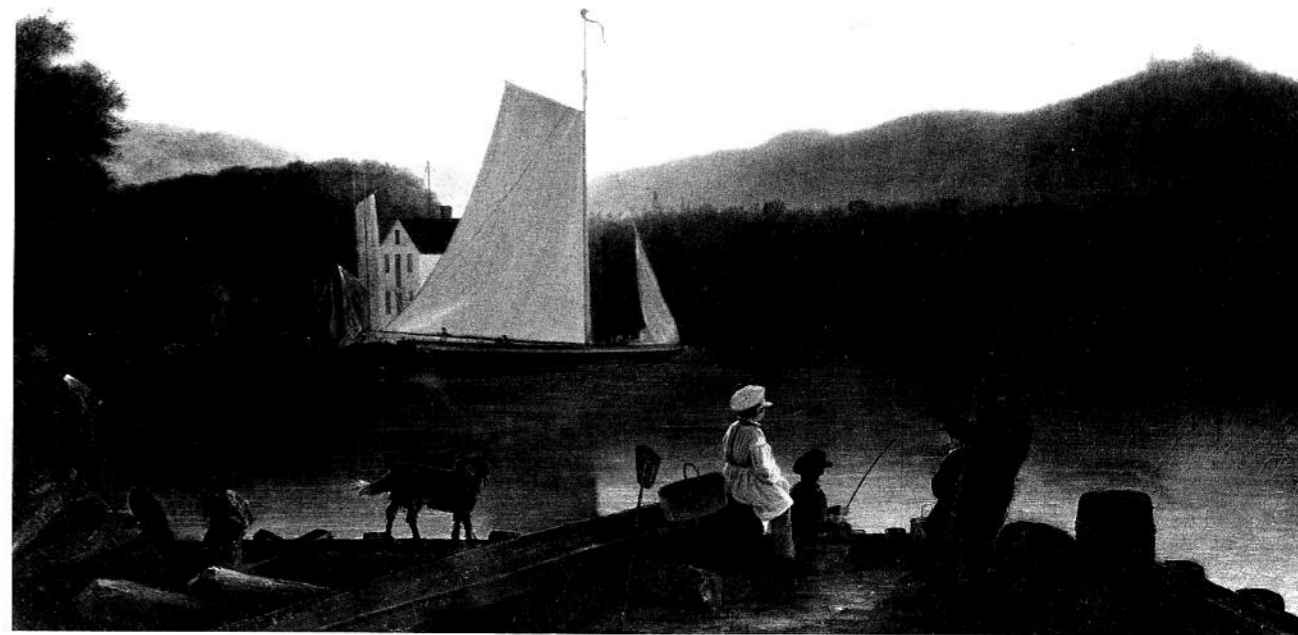
## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

• THE NATIONAL LANCERS ON BOSTON COMMON	<i>Frontispiece</i>
A MAINE INLET	1
• GLOUCESTER FROM BROOKBANK	2
FRESH WATER COVE FROM DOLLIVER'S NECK, GLOUCESTER	3
NEW YORK HARBOR	4
SHIPS IN ICE OFF TEN POUND ISLAND, GLOUCESTER	5
OWL'S HEAD, PENOBSCOT BAY, MAINE	6
BRIG ANTELOPE IN BOSTON HARBOR	7
AT THE FISHING GROUNDS	8
IPSWICH BAY	9
• BRACE'S ROCK, EASTERN POINT, GLOUCESTER	10
•	
•	

#### A MAINE INLET

From documents it is known that Lane visited Maine in the eighteen-fifties, and from his paintings he must have made earlier visits. This unidentified inlet resembles many that Lane must have seen on such trips, and from the style it is probably an early work, perhaps of

the eighteen-thirties. The palette is limited to grays, greens, and browns; the topographical detail of his later work is lacking, and the human element is more prominent than in his mature style, where it is usually incidental.

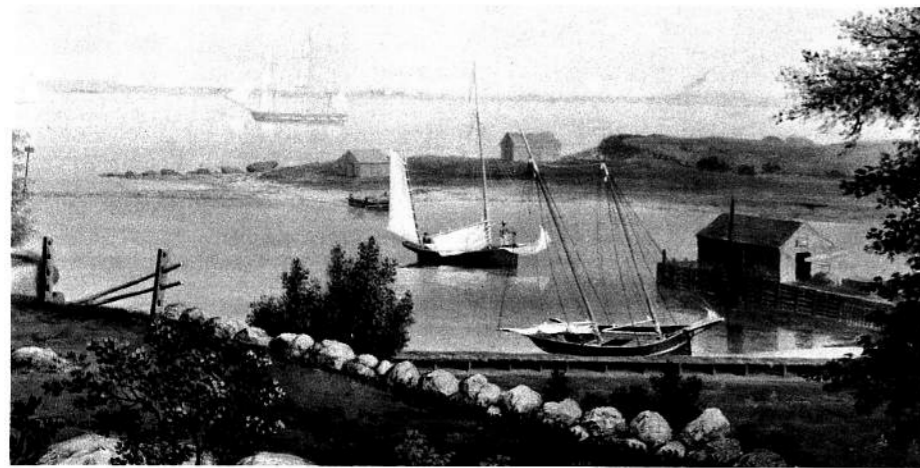


1 *A Maine Inlet*. M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1805-1865. 48.443

GLOUCESTER FROM BROOKBANK

This view was painted perhaps in the late eighteenthies from Samuel E. Sawyer's estate, which can be seen in Lane's paintings of Fresh Water Cove. On the extreme right is Dolliver's Neck jutting out into the cove. Several preliminary sketches of the cows and the landscape are in the Samuel Mansfield Collection at

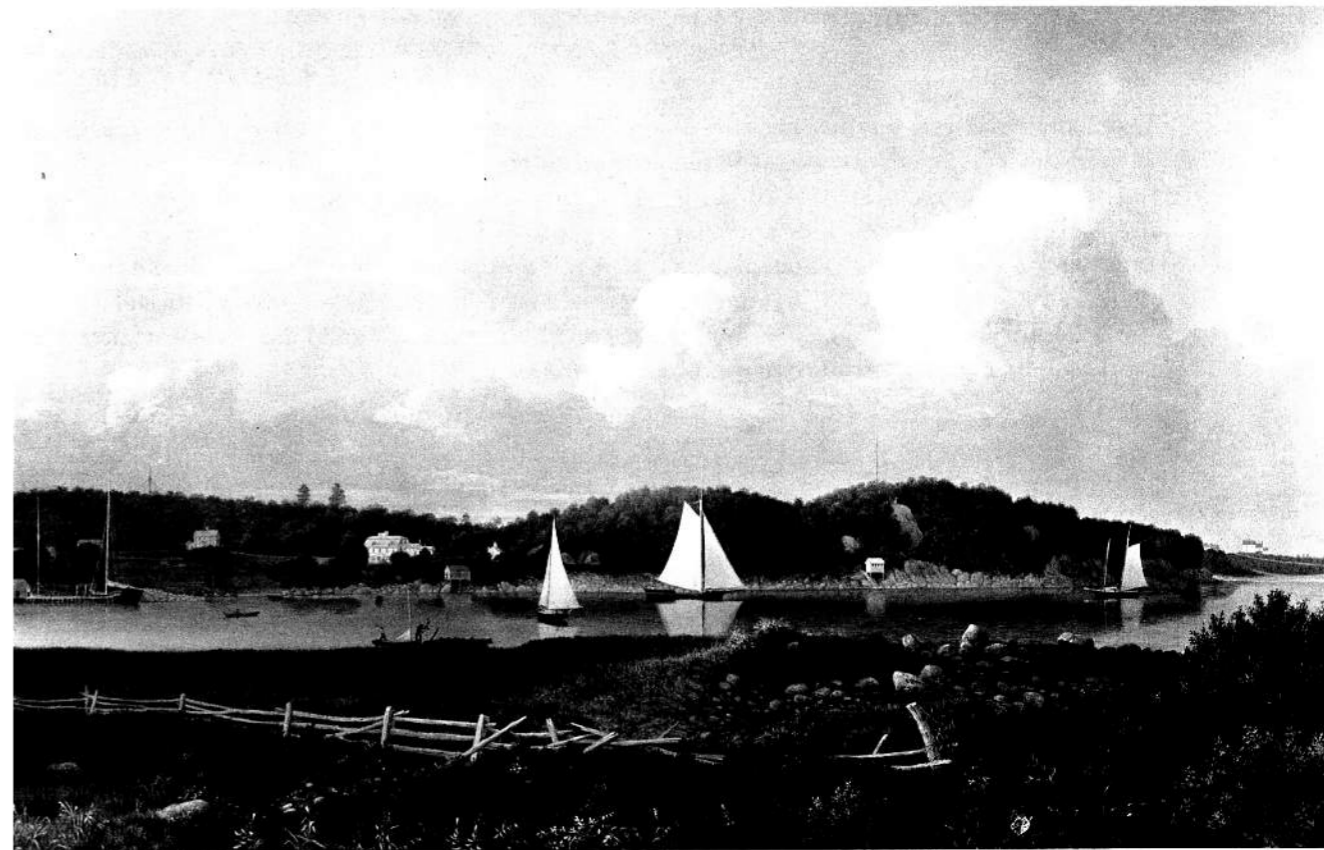
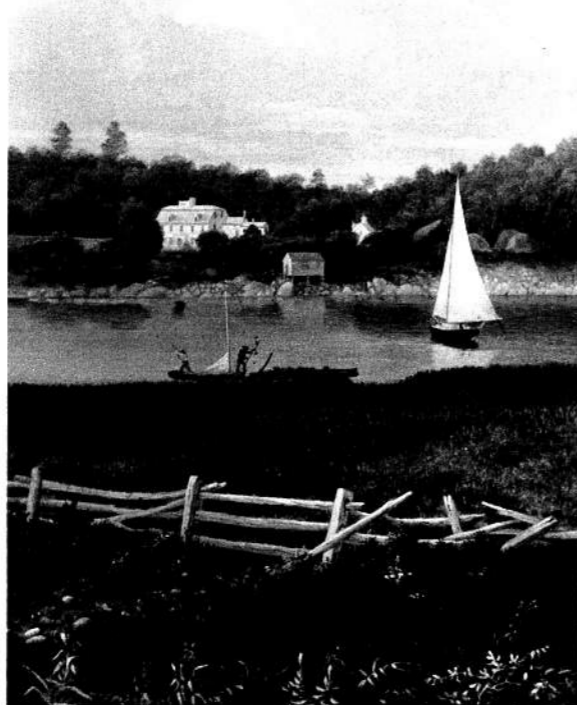
the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary, and Historical Association, Gloucester. Lane did many topographical studies and his painted views of Gloucester are accurate records of the town as it appeared between 1830 and 1860; he also made pencil sketches for a town history published in 1860.



2 *Gloucester from Brookbank*. M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815-1865.  
48.444

FRESH WATER COVE FROM DOLLIVER'S NECK, GLOUCESTER

Painted perhaps in the late eighteen-forties, this picture shows the opposite shore of the cove from that which appears in *Gloucester from Brookbank*. The estate on the farther shore belonged to Samuel E. Sawyer, a Boston merchant and benefactor of Gloucester. It was called Brookbank because of a small stream which ran across it. The house was built in 1714. Views of this estate appear in at least two other paintings by Lane, one of which is in the Sawyer Free Library in Gloucester, and the other belonged in 1938 to Mrs. Harriet G. Whitman. It also appears in several drawings by Lane, one of which (Samuel Mansfield Collection in the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary, and Historical Association, Gloucester) is a panoramic pencil sketch (10½ x 41 in.) inscribed *Fresh Water Cove from Dolliver's Neck*. *F. H. Lane del.*, showing the Brookbank side of the cove to the end of the point. One section of the drawing is clearly the basis of this painting and is closely related to the other two views of Brookbank mentioned above. Use of a panoramic sketch as a preparation for more than one painting was evidently a usual procedure with Lane.

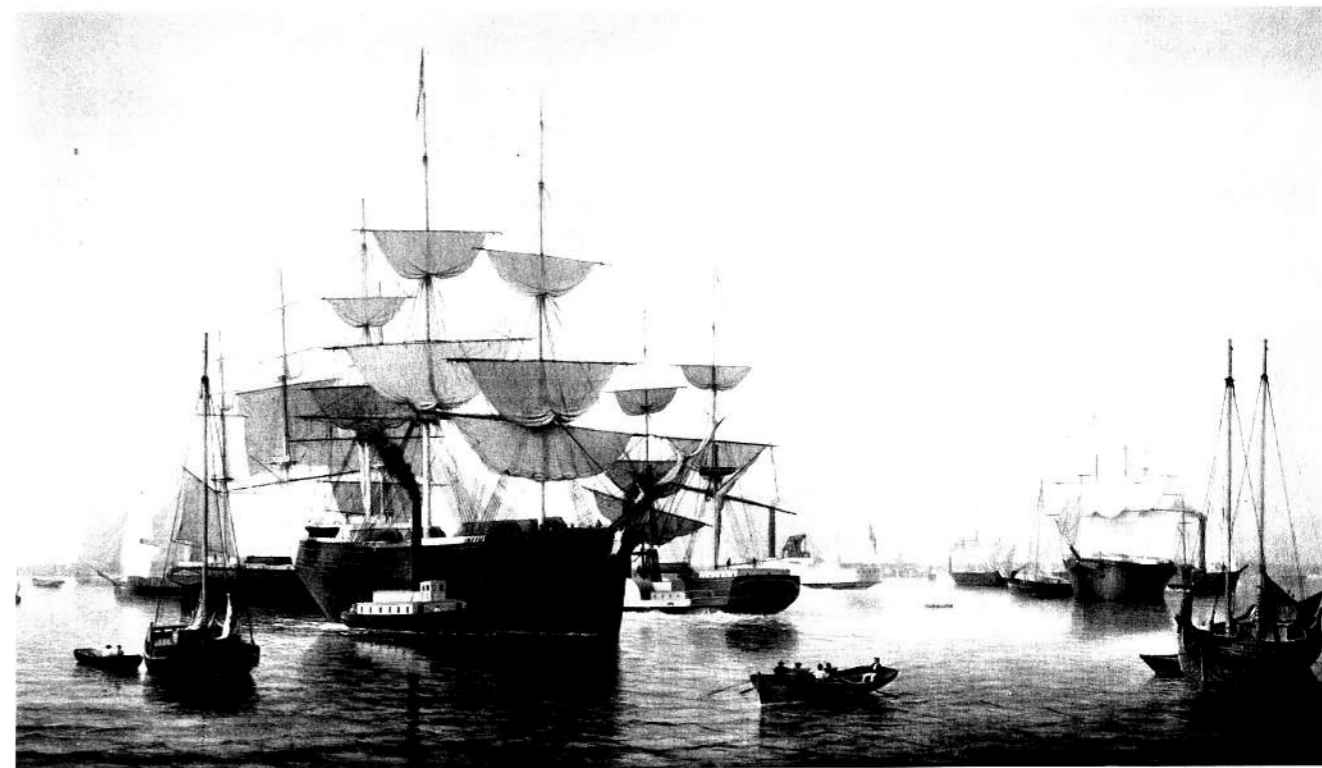


3 *Fresh Water Cove from Dolliver's Neck, Gloucester*. M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815-1865. 48.445

#### NEW YORK HARBOR

Painted in 1850. Lane exhibited another picture of this title in that year, described in the catalogue of the American Art Union as showing "vessels of all kinds lying at anchor or sailing. In the distance the spires of the city." The dimensions of the Art Union picture are given as 28 by 42 inches, so it cannot be the one belonging to the Museum (which measures 36 by 60 inches), though it may be either a smaller version or

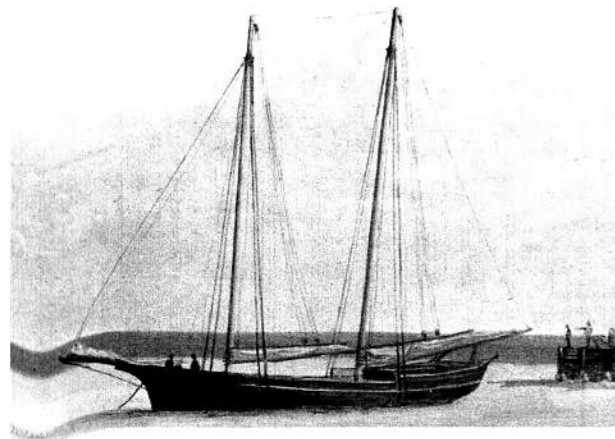
merely similar in subject. Because of the precision of detail in the Museum's picture, it seems hardly possible that Lane did not see the scene, though there is no record of his having visited New York. The ships are typical merchantmen of the period, and the steamer is of a type similar to several built between 1840 and 1850. The picture is signed and dated at lower right *Fitz H. Lane 1850*.



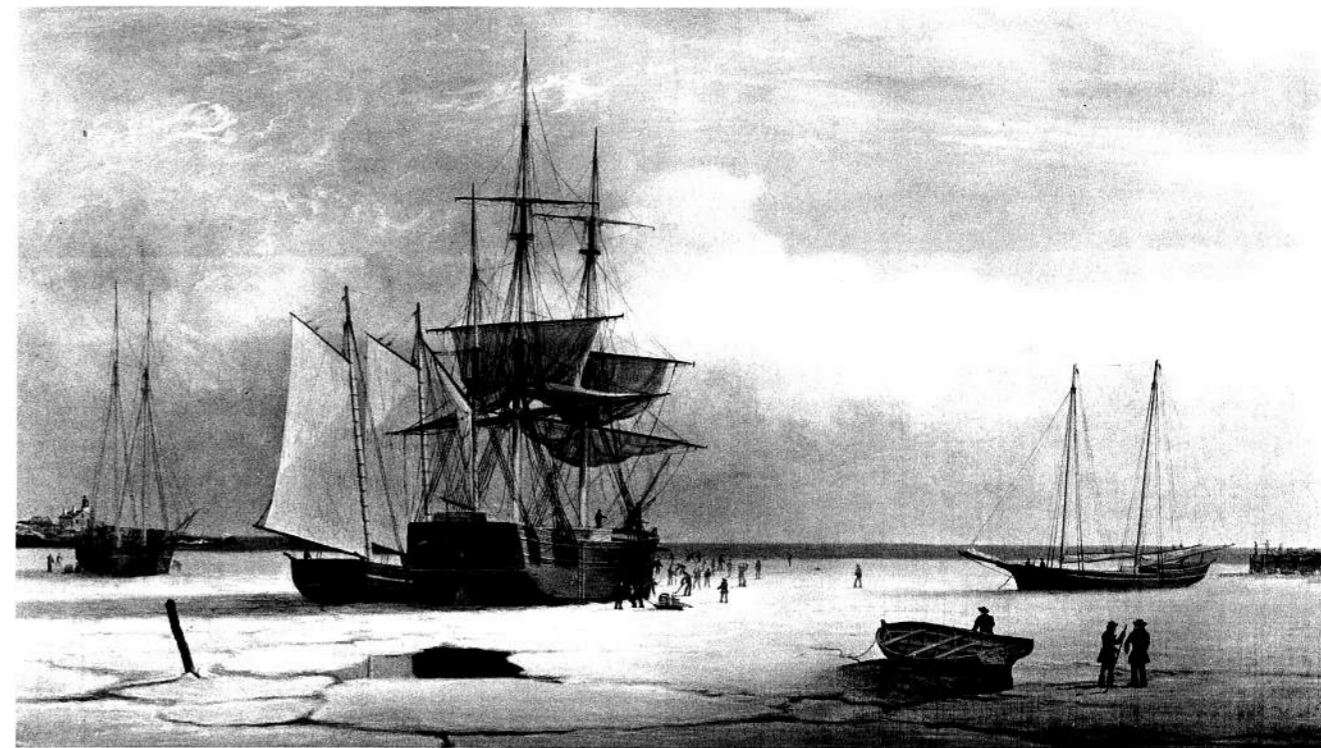
4 *New York Harbor*. M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815-1865. 48.446



SHIPS IN ICE OFF TEN POUND ISLAND, GLOUCESTER



The artist's inscription on a pencil sketch of the island (Samuel Mansfield Collection in the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary, and Historical Association, Gloucester) identifies the scene as Gloucester Harbor and not Maine as was formerly suggested. Ten Pound Island was named for the price of its purchase from the Indians; it is now a Coast Guard station. Judging from the style, this picture, painted in grays, gray-blues, and browns, probably dates from the eighteen-fifties. The square-rigged vessel in the center is of a type common before 1860, and the other three are "heel tappers," popular with fishermen between 1800 and 1830, though some were built along the Maine Coast at an even later date.

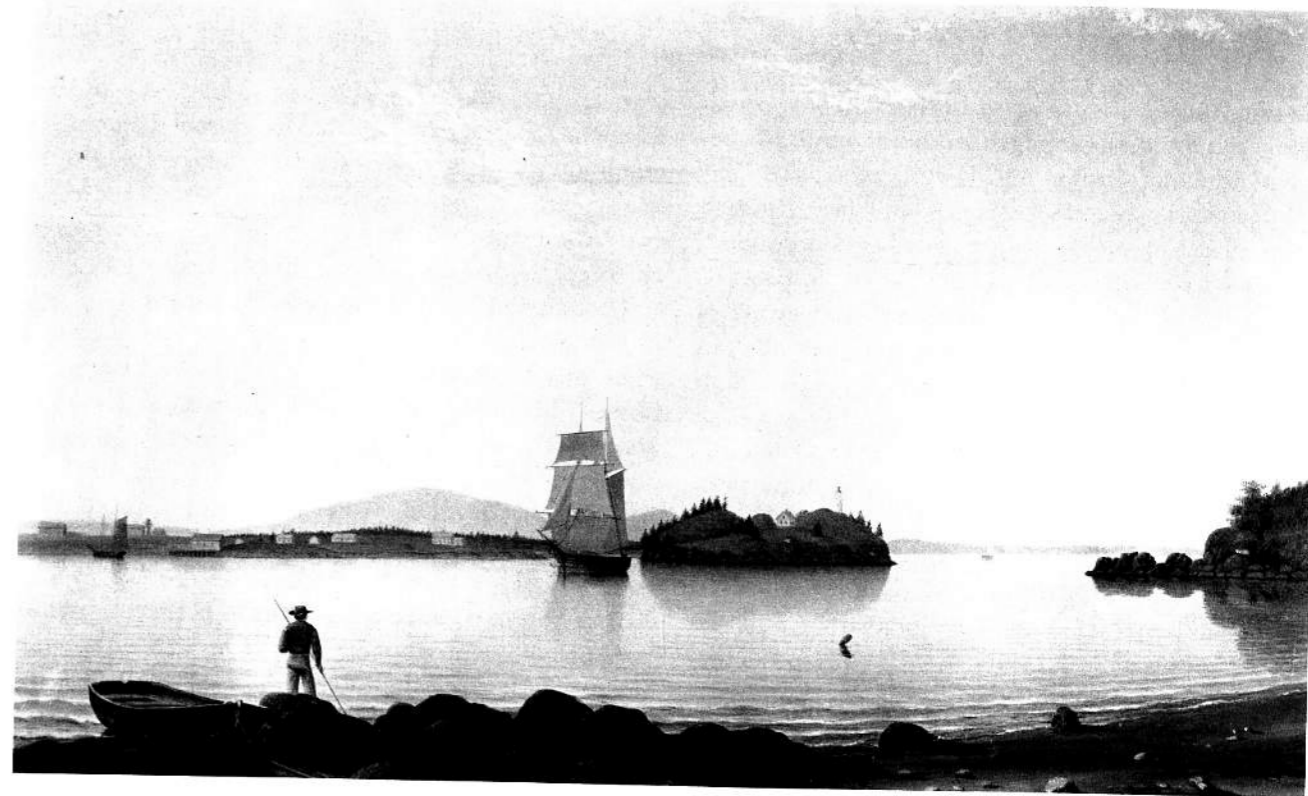
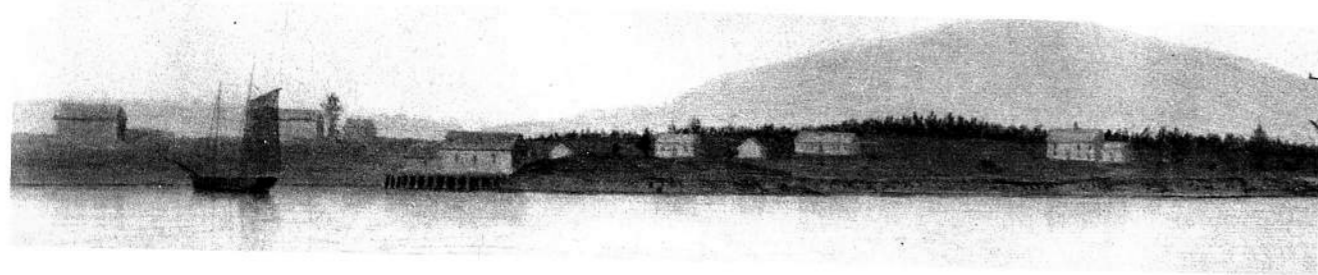


5 *Ships in Ice off Ten Pound Island, Gloucester.* M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815-1865. 48.447

OWL'S HEAD, PENOBSCOT BAY, MAINE

Owl's Head is a point which gives its name to a small town east of Rockland on Penobscot Bay. In this picture the Head appears to the right of the sailing vessel, a hermaphrodite brig. Champlain landed here in 1605, and it is the site of the massacre in 1755 of nine warriors by the famous Indian fighter Captain Cargyle. From dated drawings by Lane it is evident that he made several trips to this region, probably travelling by water. In 1851 he made a sketch of Owl's Head from the landing, and in September, 1855, he and two companions, J. S. Stevens, Jr., and J. S. (?) Hooper, returned there by boat from Rockland, and the artist made several further sketches (Samuel Mansfield Collection in

the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary and Historical Association, Gloucester). One of these, a view from the southern end of the island opposite Owl's Head, is the basis of this painting of 1862, one of six known versions of the subject. In 1938 the others were in Gloucester in the possession of Mr. James Stacy, Mrs. Samuel Mansfield (two versions), the children of Mrs. J. Everett Garland, and the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary, and Historical Society. Signed and dated on the back of the canvas: *Owl's Head—Penobscot Bay*, by F. H. Lane, 1862, the picture is an outstanding example of Lane's ability to capture the cool clarity of the light of the northern Atlantic coast.



6 *Owl's Head, Penobscot Bay, Maine.* M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815-1865.  
48.448

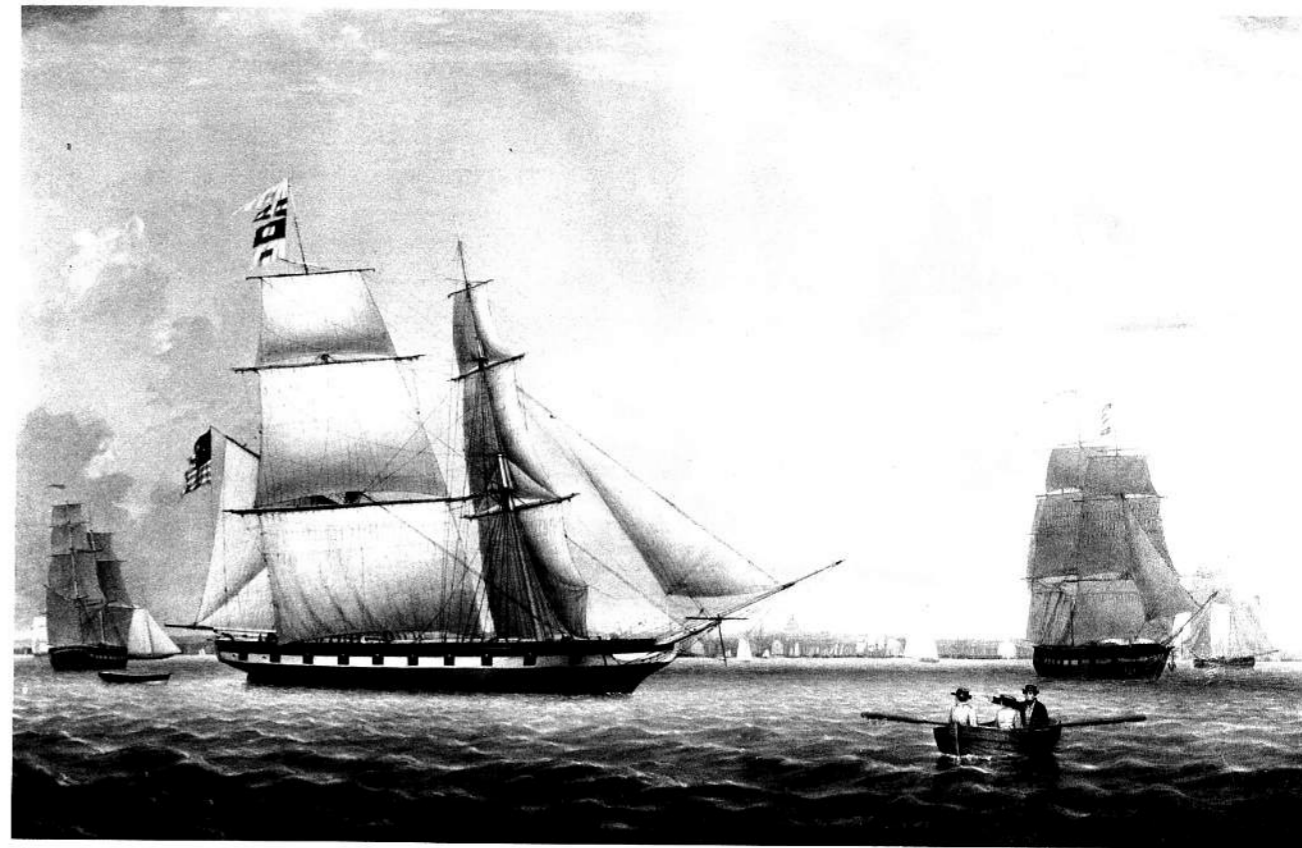
#### BRIG 'ANTELOPE' IN BOSTON HARBOR

The brig *Antelope*, built at East Boston and of approximately 370 tons, was engaged in the opium trade between India and Canton and is still considered "the only square-rigged vessel which could beat through the Formosa Channel against the northeast monsoon." In his *Personal Reminiscences* (Boston, 1878, p. 211), Robert B. Forbes, who was master and part owner of the *Antelope* in 1843, writes of his arrival in 1845 at Bombay in the steam bark *Edith*, which "had there in port a formidable competitor, the brig 'Antelope,' a famous clipper, commanded by one of the most competent men, P. Dumaresq; a vessel I had built by Samuel Hall, in 1843, for Russell & Co. The 'Edith' could get no freight until she should be out of the way. She finally got off,—sailing ten or more days after the 'Antelope,'—and arrived only a day or two after her in China. . . . The value of auxiliary steam was fully illustrated on this occasion: the 'Edith' and Captain Lewis were no match in sailing qualities in competition with the favorite 'Antelope' and the energetic Captain Du-

maresq. . . ." After a short but eventful career, during which she won a great reputation for speed and made much money for her owners, the *Antelope* was caught in a typhoon in 1848 and dismantled. She was re-rigged as a bark but thereby lost her speed and was wrecked on August 2, 1852, near Woo-Sung, China.

Though the back of the canvas is inscribed *F. H. Lane, 1863*, the picture represents an event in 1843 when the *Antelope* sailed for China never to return to Boston. She is flying her code number as listed in *Marryat's Universal Code of Signals*: first distinguishing pennant, 4, 8, 1; probably this number was not assigned to her until she was on the China coast. The ship to right signals in Parker's system: 4, 3, 6, 4; according to *The United States Telegraph Vocabulary* (edition of 1836 corrected to 1841), this is the number of the *Cherokee*, approximately 410 tons, built in 1827 at Medford by George Fuller. In 1843 William Cushing was master and part owner.

One of Lane's pencil sketches of Boston Harbor

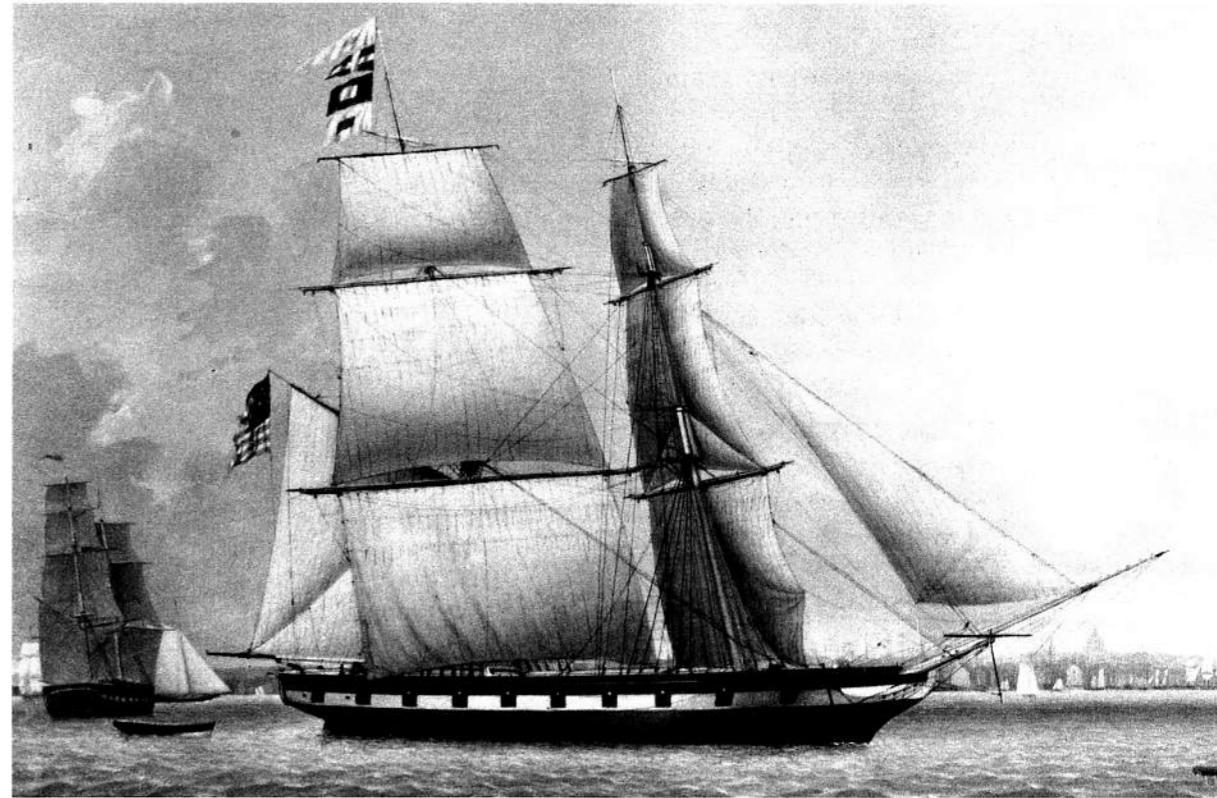


7 *Brig Antelope in Boston Harbor*. M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815-1865.  
48.449

(Samuel Mansfield Collection in the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary, and Historical Association, Gloucester) shows the shore line much as it appears in the background of this painting. This drawing, with several similar sketches, was also preparatory for *Ships in Boston Harbor*, now at the Sargent Murray Gilman Hough House, Gloucester, and painted a year earlier in 1862.

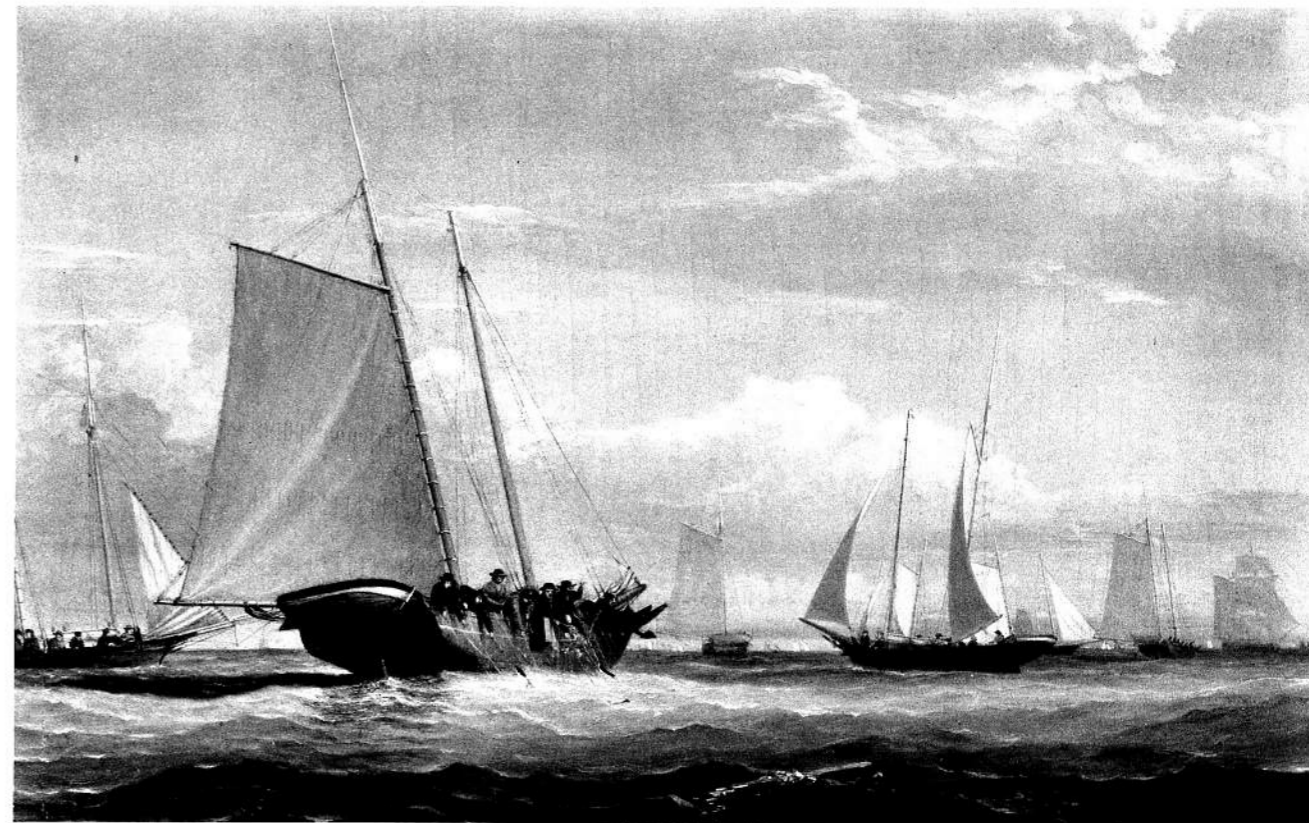
In his essay on *American Architecture*, first published in 1843, the year in which the *Antelope* was built, Horatio Greenough, the American neo-classic sculptor, used the contemporary sailing vessel as a supreme example of practical design resulting in true beauty: "Let us now turn to a structure of our own, one which, from its nature and uses, commands us to reject authority, and we shall find the result of the manly use of plain good sense, so like that of taste, and genius too, as scarce to require a distinctive title.

Observe a ship at sea! Mark the majestic form of her hull as she rushes through the water, observe the graceful bend of her body, the gentle transition from round to flat, the grasp of her keel, the leap of her bows, the symmetry and rich tracery of her spars and rigging, and those grand wind muscles, her sails. Behold an organization second only to that of an animal, obedient as the horse, swift as the stag, and bearing the burden of a thousand camels from pole to pole! What academy of design, what research of connoisseurship, what imitation of the Greeks produced this marvel of construction? Here is the result of the study of man upon the great deep, where Nature spake of the laws of building, not in the feather and in the flower, but in winds and waves, and he bent all his mind to hear and to obey." (See Tuckerman, *Memorial to Horatio Greenough*, 1853, pp. 124-125.)



#### AT THE FISHING GROUNDS

Signed and dated 1851, the picture shows fishing schooners, probably Gloucestermen, accompanied by a hermaphrodite or jackass brig which appears to the far right, off the North Atlantic coast hand-lining for codfish. Though the sea is unusually calm, the scene of the painting has been identified as probably the Grand Banks where the advice of Captain John Smith has long been followed: "Let not the meanness of the word fish distaste you, for it will afford as good gold as the mines of Guiana and Potassie." Fishing became the life blood of the New England economy, feeding the people who dwelt up and down the Atlantic coast, in the West Indies, and even in France, Spain, and Portugal, where tons of dried fish were shipped annually. It is no wonder that the sacred cod still hangs above the heads of the legislators in the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as a constant reminder of the importance of the North Atlantic fisheries to the economic well-being of their constituents.

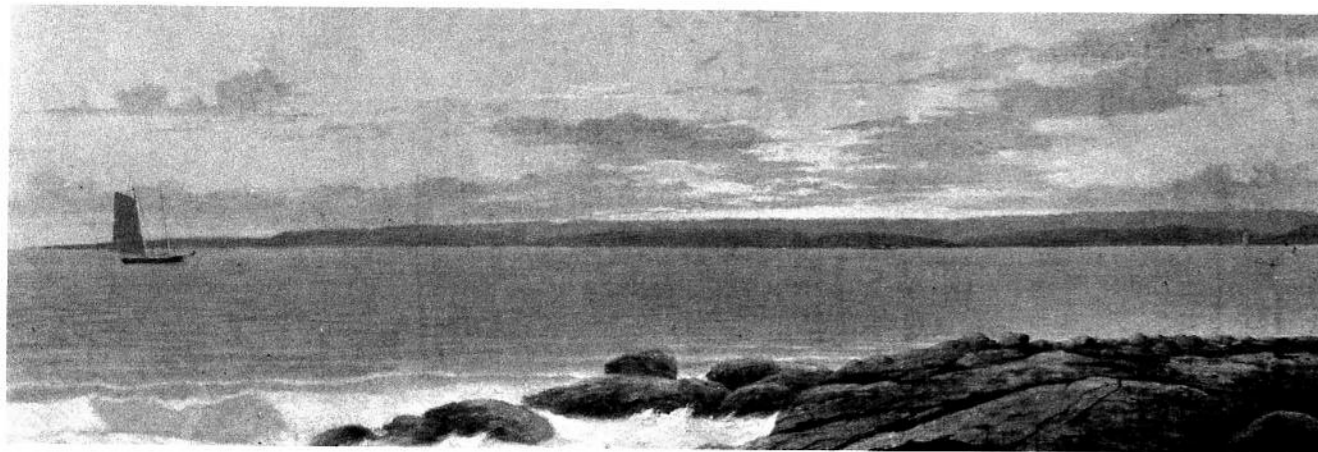


8 *At the Fishing Grounds.* Gift of Miss Caroline W. Trask. 35.1981

#### IPSWICH BAY

An inscription in Lane's hand on the back of the canvas reads: *From a sketch made August, 1862*. It is thus a late work of the artist and shows the more highly developed sensitivity to effects of light and atmosphere typical of Lane's mature painting. There are a few others of his pictures which, like this one, have no figures whatsoever, and include but very few evidences of

man's activity, such as the sailboats and distant lighthouse here, and then largely only to emphasize through scale and distance the immensity of the empty expanse of sea, shore, and sky; it seems likely that they are among his last works, in which, like those of Winslow Homer, the subject has become nature alone, with scarcely a suggestion of human intrusion.

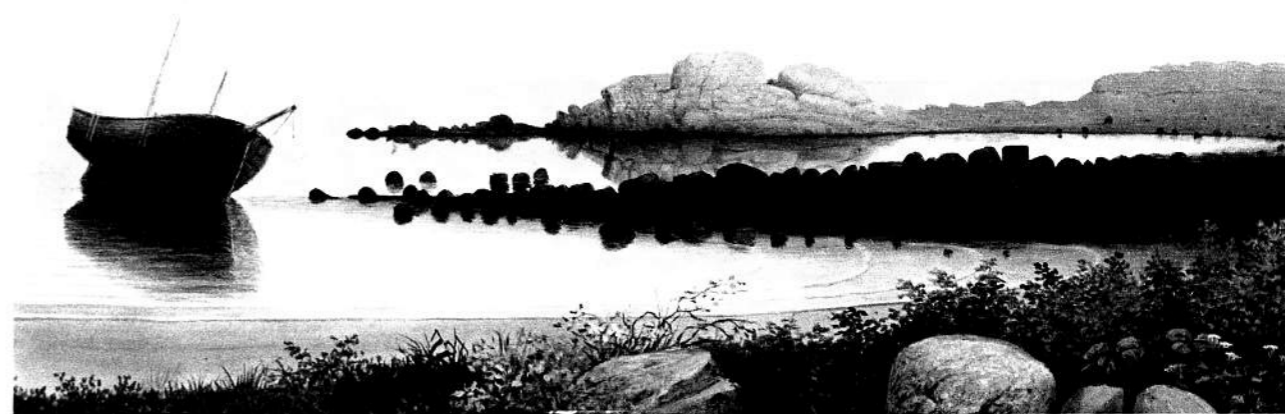
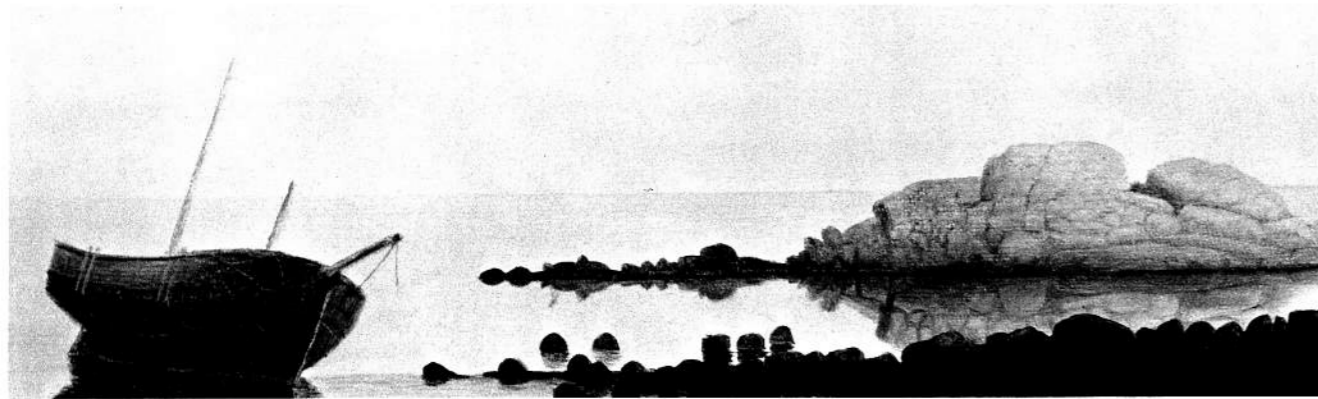


9 *Ipswich Bay*. Gift of Mrs. Barclay Tilton, in memory of Dr. Herman E. Davidson. 53.383

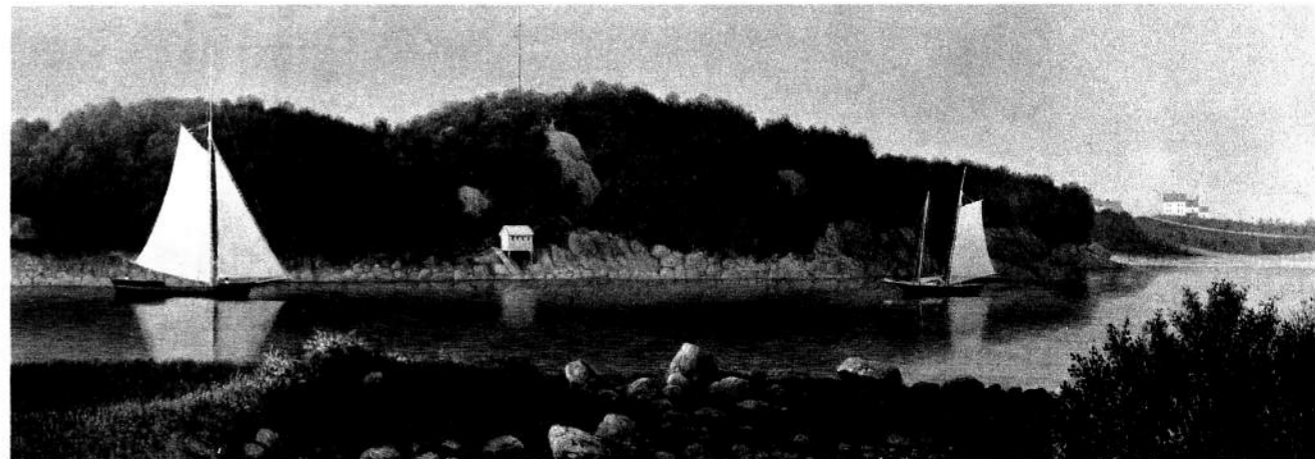
BRACE'S ROCK, EASTERN POINT, GLOUCESTER

The subject of this painting is identified by the inscription, *Brace's Rock, Eastern Point F. H. Lane del. Aug. 1863*, probably in the artist's hand on a drawing (10 x 15 in.) which is in the Samuel Mansfield Collection in the Cape Ann Scientific, Literary, and Historical Association, Gloucester. A further inscription states that *Paintings [were] made from this part of sketch for Mrs. H. E. Davidson, Mrs. G. P. Low, Mr. J. (?) Whipple, James Houghton (?)*, *James Mansfield*, followed by the

initials F H L (the artist himself?), I.L.L.W. (?), C.S. H.L. The Museum painting and one which in 1938 was in the possession of Mrs. David Low, Asheville, North Carolina, account for two of this group, but the others have not been located. It is not known whether the stranded boat, which appears in the Museum's picture but not in the drawing, is in any of the other versions; here, by suggesting the utter loneliness of the scene, it establishes the mood of the painting.



10 *Brace's Rock, Eastern Point, Gloucester*. M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815-1865. 48.450



BIBLIOGRAPHY: Brooks, A. M., "The Fitz Lane House in Gloucester," in *The Essex Institute Historical Collections*, July, 1942, LXXVIII, pp. 281-283; Brooks, A. M., "Fitz Lane's Drawings," in *The Essex Institute Historical Collections*, Jan., 1945, LXXXI, pp. 83-86; Champney, Benjamin, *Sixty Years' Memories of Art and Artists*, Woburn, Mass., 1900; McCormick, G. E., "Fitz Hugh Lane, Gloucester Artist, 1804-1865," in *Art Quarterly*, vol. 15, 1952, pp. 291-306; *M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings, 1815 to 1865*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1949, pp. 396-415; *Commemorative Exhibition, Paintings by Martin J. Heade and Fitz Hugh Lane*, M. Knoedler and Co., 1954: Introduction by John I. H. Baur; information generously contributed by Alfred Mansfield Brooks, Charles D. Childs, and Mrs. Nancy Twombly Fowle.